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LETTER DATED 24 JULY 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Yesterday, on 23 July 1999, innocent Serbian farmers, including women and children, were massacred while working in their fields in the Kosovo and Metohija village of Staro Gradsko.

This crime is the last and the most ruthless so far in the series of atrocities that the armed gangs of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have committed systematically against the Serbian, Montenegrin and other non-Albanian populations ever since the arrival of the international security (KFOR) and civil (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)) presences in Kosovo and Metohija. The Yugoslav Government has warned on several occasions of the tragic consequences of the tolerant attitude of KFOR towards the so-called KLA and other Albanian gangs, killing, kidnapping and burning the houses of the Serbian and other non-Albanian populations in Kosovo and Metohija and usurping private and public property unperturbed. Unfortunately, the Security Council has paid no heed.

The primary responsibility for the situation in Kosovo and Metohija rests in the Security Council, which is duty-bound to take all necessary measures to prevail upon the international presences in Kosovo and Metohija to act in accordance with their obligations and put an end to the ethnic cleansing of the non-Albanian population, carried out at an ever-faster and more tragic pace.

Defusing the dramatic situation in Kosovo and Metohija and preventing atrocities against the Serbian and other non-Albanian populations is of vital importance for the implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999 and the military-technical agreement (S/1999/682, annex) relative to the instantaneous and full disarmament of the so-called KLA and other Albanian gangs, as well as Albanian civilians who, unlike the Serbian ones, continue to possess large quantities of arms. It is necessary to urgently deploy the forces of the army and police of Yugoslavia and customs personnel on the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia towards Macedonia and Albania, as well as within Kosovo and Metohija, in accordance with the military-technical agreement. It is also necessary to ensure full respect for the laws of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Kosovo and Metohija and to guarantee security to all its inhabitants.

I have been instructed by my Government to request you to urgently convene a meeting of the Security Council to adopt necessary measures to ensure the full protection of the Serbian, Montenegrin, Roma and other non-Albanian populations of Kosovo and Metohija and the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the military-technical agreement. I trust and believe that this time the Security Council will not only condemn these hideous crimes, but will also take energetic and concrete steps to prevail upon KFOR and UNMIK to fulfil all its obligations.

Enclosed herewith is the statement of the Yugoslav leadership regarding the massacre in Staro Gradsko (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Statement by the Yugoslav leadership regarding the massacre of 14 Serbian farmers - men, women and children - in the village of Staro Gradsko in Kosovo and Metohija, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on 23 July 1999

At a meeting of President Slobodan Milosevic and the highest State officials, it was determined that the massacre of Serbian farmers, women and children in the village of Staro Gradsko was a direct result of impermissible non-compliance of the United Nations civilian mission and KFOR with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999 and the military-technical agreement (S/1999/682, annex). KFOR and the United Nations mission bear the full and undivided responsibility for this hideous crime. Any verbal condemnations of these crimes are not acceptable to the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is necessary to effect the immediate arrest of criminal groups and to fully fulfil the obligations of the security forces under United Nations auspices, which are to ensure the security of Serbs and other non-Albanian residents and to fully implement Security Council resolutions and the military-technical agreement. Delay in the disarmament of terrorist gangs by the security forces under United Nations auspices and failure to ensure full protection of all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, even after six weeks since the United Nations took over the responsibility to ensure security of the citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, represents a crime against the civilian population. The intentionally tolerant approach of KFOR towards gangs of murderers and the fact that they are allowed to infiltrate across the border without hindrance is equal to cooperation with criminal gangs that are terrorizing the civilian population.

Failure to disarm Albanian terrorists and alleged agreements between KFOR and the terrorist "KLA" on disarmament represent a mere manipulation of the public, because KFOR, as well as all those living in this country, are aware that the so-called "KLA" is nothing but a group of bandits and criminals, drug dealers and murderers, who represent a cancer for the entire Balkans and Europe.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia demands that the United Nations Security Council immediately undertake vigorous measures to ensure implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), order the immediate disarmament of all criminal groups, ensure the fulfilment of the obligation to guarantee safety to all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija and enable the urgent return to Kosovo and Metohija of the envisaged contingents of the police and army of Yugoslavia in accordance with the military-technical agreement.